कार्यवाही किए जाने की अनुमति प्रदान कर दी है; और

(घ) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण है?

वाणिज्य मंत्री (श्री रामकृष्ण हेगडे): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) जी, हां।

(ग) उत्तर प्रदेश शासन के आर्थिक अपराध संघ के अनुरोध के अनुसार, एमएमटीसी के पांच अधिकारियों के विरूद्ध कार्रवाई शुरू करने के लिए वाणिज्य मंत्रालय से प्रशासनिक अनुमोदन मांगा गया था। इनमें एक ऐसा अधिकारी भी शामिल है जो अब एमएमटीसी छोड़ चुका है। उत्तर प्रदेश शासन के आर्थिक उपराध स्कंध के अनुरोध-पत्र में जिन अधिकारियों के नाम दिए गए है, उन सभी के विरुद्ध कार्रवाई शुरू करने के लिए "अनापत्ति प्रमाणपत्र" दिया गया है।

(घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Negative Growth rate in Exports

5. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI S.M. KRISHNA:
MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be please to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been 3 per cent negative growth recorded in Indian exports during first six months of 1998-99;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of export performance during the corresponding period in the last three years, year-wise;

(d) what immediate short-term measures his Ministry have taken or propose to take for increasing exports;

(e) whether there are some problems of payment in regard to exports to Russia and other CIS countries;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the efforts made by Government to solve these problems?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) As per the provisional data of DGCI&S exports registered a growth of 12.26% in rupee terms and a decline of 3.28 % in dollar terms during April-September, 1998-99.

(b) The exports were affected due to a general slow down in world trade and especially recession in many countries in South East Asia, Japan and Germany, domestic supply constraints in some sectors such as agricultural commodities and barriers in markets of European Union(EU).

(c) As per the provisional data of Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S) export performance during April-September, 1996-97, 97-98 and 98-99 in dollar terms and in rupee terms are given below:—

April-September	% growth (Us $ Mn)	% growth (Rs. Crores)
1996-97	9.91	21.91
1997-98	4.22	6.38
1998-99	-3.28	12.26

(d) A number of steps have been taken to promote exports which include lowering of interest rates on export credit, reduction in transaction cost through decentralisation and simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and bilateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions. A Cabinet Committee on Foreign Trade has also been set up to review the export performance.

(e) No specific representation regarding problems of payments in exports to Russia and other CIS countries has been received during the first six months of the year 1998-99.

(f) and (g) Do not arise.

Trade Concessions to SAARC Countries

6. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what specific trade concessions were offered and extended to SAARC countries following the Colombo Summit, including creation of a Free Trade Zone amongst the SAARC member countries;

(b) how far the imports from and exports to these countries have increased during the

following months, as compared to those in the corresponding months last year; and

(c) what further steps are contemplated towards converting SAARC region into an European/ASEAN economic community?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) During the Colombo Summit in July, 1998, an offer was made to all the SAARC member countries that India would be willing to consider bilateral Free Trade Agreements to accelerate the pace of trade liberalisation in the region. Positive response to this offer has been received only from Sri Lanka so far. Further, import restrictions maintained by India for BOP reasons on 2307 items have been removed for imports from the SAARC countries.

(b) After the Colombo Summit in Jully, 1998 the trade data available is only for August, 1998. This data indicate significant increase in imports from and exports to SAARC countries as compared to August, 1997.

(c) At present, there are no proposals under consideration for establishment of an economic community in South Asia.

Dumping of Fused Magnesia

7. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Andhra Pradesh Government has requested the Government to take steps for prevention of dumping of fused magnesia by China and to consider a provisional anti dumping duty in the context of sea water magnesia plant set-up by M/s. Birla Periclase Limited, Visakhapatnam; and

(b) if so, the measures taken to avoid irreparable damage to the above nascent industry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The Designated Authority appointed under the Customs Tariff Act and the Rules made thereunder is conducting anti-dumping investigations into alleged dumping of fused magnesia by China based on petition field by M/s. Birla Periclase Limited, Visakhapatnam. A Letter has also been received from the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in this regard. The Designated Authority has held an oral hearing and is in the process of announcing recommendations in the matters.

Export and Import of Onion

8. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of onion exported between April 98 and September 98;

(b) the quantity of onion imported, so far; and

(c) the quantity of onion proposed to be imported further dring the year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Quantity of onions exported during 1998 is as under:

Month	Qty. In MTs
April	69735
May	56427
June	40674
July	27981
August	15316
Sept.	2539

(b) and (c) The import of Onions has been made free vide Notification No. 25(RE-98)/97-02 dated 15-10-98. NAFED has imported a total of 687 M.T. of onions during October-November, 1998. As per figures available with customs authorities, 5594 MT of onions have been imported after this item was put on the free list.

Export and Import Performance

9. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the export performance of the country vis-a-vis import during April-September, 1998;

(b) the rate of decline as compared to the corresponding period of the last year;